

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 12451

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PK, MILI

SUBJECT: PAF BRIEFING ON REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT

REF: ISLAMABAD A-178

1. THE PAF HAS PREPARED A COMPREHENSIVE BRIEFING ON ITS AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT NEEDS WHICH IT GIVES TO MOST OFFICIAL WESTERN TRAVELLERS WHO VISIT PESHAWAR. THE BRIEFING, WHICH WAS MOST RECENTLY GIVEN TO DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS, IS BEING POUCHED TO ADDRESSEES FOR THEIR BACKGROUND. ALTHOUGH BRIEFING OBVIOUSLY EMPHASIZES PAF'S NEED FOR A REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT, IT IS GENERALLY SOPHISTICATED AND DELIVERED IN A MANNER DESIGNED TO BUILD A STRONG CASE IN WESTERN EYES FOR REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT SALE. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF BRIEFING CONTAINED REPAIR.

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2. PAKISTAN VIEWS IT 2,300 MILE BORDER WITH INDIA AS

ITS MOST SERIOUS THREAT. IT COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION LINES LIE CLOSE TO THE BORDER. THEREFORE PAF MUST EITHER HAVE LARGE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT DEPLOYED AT AIR BASES ALL ALONG BORDER, OR UTILIZE RELATIVELY LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT FROM FEWER BASES. SIX HUNDRED MILE COASTLINE AND NEED FOR NAVAL AIR SUPPORT IS FURTHER DEMAND ON PAF. PAK/AFGHAN 1,500 MILE BORDER IS ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL CONFLICT SPOT AND PAF COULD NOT SUPPORT LAND OPERATIONS ON BOTH BORDERS.

3. IN 1971 INDIA DEPLOYED 28 TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRONS AGAINST WEST PAKISTAN AND 10 AGAINST EAST. POST-71 SITUATION ALLOWS IAF TO DEPLOY GREATER NUMBER OF SQUADRONS AGAINST PAKISTAN. IAF IS FOURTH LARGEST AIR FORCE IN WORLD AND RATIO OF PAF TO IAF AIRCRAFT IS 1:5. IAF HAS 725 COMBAT AIRCRAFT INCLUDING 220 MIG-21S. IAF ALSO EQUIPPED WITH INDIAN-MADE GNATS AND MARUTS IN ADDITION TO SU-7S. DISPARITY BETWEEN IAF AND PAF IS CONTINUALLY INCREASING DUE TO IAF'S INDIGENOUS MANUFACTURING CAPABILITY AND CONSTANT SUPPLY OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT AND MISSILES.

4. DISPARITY FURTHER ACCENTUATED BY FACT THAT 70 PERCENT OF PAF'S TACTICAL SUPPORT AIRCRAFT CONSIST OF 22-YEAR OLD F-86S AND B-57S. PAF'S MIG-19S ARE POINT DEFENSE FIGHTERS AND NOT ADEQUATE FOR AIR SUPPORT. BETWEEN 1965 AND 1971 INDIA BUILT SEVEN AIRFIELDS DIRECTED AGAINST PAKISTAN AND FIVE AGAINST CHINA. SINCE 1971, FIVE NEW AIRFIELDS HAVE BEEN BUILT CLOSE TO THE PAK BORDER WHILE NONE HAVE BEEN BUILT AGAINST CHINESE. TO SUPPORT AN ATTACK ON PAKISTAN IAF CAN LAUNCH OVER 1,000 AND THE AFGHAN AIR FORCE ABOUT 200 SORTIES EVERY DAY, WHEREAS PAF COULD GENERATE ONLY JUST OVER 400 SORTIES DAILY.

5. IF INDIAN ARMY ATTEMPTS ATTACK ACROSS BORDER, PAF'S MISSION WOULD BE TO DELAY ADVANCE TO ALLOW PAK ARMY TO REGROUP AND BRING RESERVES IN TO RESTORE SITUATION. CONSIDERING RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF AIRFIELDS, AND LONG BORDER, A PLACE WITH AN EXTENDED LOITER TIME AND MORE RANGE THAN POINT INTERCEPTOR IS NEEDED. SINCE
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ANY INDIAN ATTACK WOULD INCLUDE CONSIDERABLE ARMOR, THE AIRCRAFT MUST CARRY SUFFICIENT ARMAMENT TO BLUNT ARMORED ATTACK AS WELL. ALSO, SINCE INDIAN NAVY IS FAR SUPERIOR TO PN, THE PAF MUST ALSO HELP PROTECT KARACHI PORT AND ITS SEA LANES. THE A-7 HAS THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT MOST CLOSELY MEET ALL THESE NEEDS OF THE PAF. THE FACT THAT IT IS ONLY A SUBSONIC AIRCRAFT SUPPORTS THE PAF CONTENTION THAT ITS ROLE WILL BE ONLY DEFENSIVE AND

THAT IT WOULD NOT BE USED FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.

6. PAF WAS PROVIDED 150 F-86S FROM 1956-60. THIRTY-FIVE REMAIN AND OF THESE 18 HAVE BEEN GROUNDED FOR CROSSING 3,000 HOUR LIFE. ONLY 17 STILL ALLOWED TO FLY AND THESE HAVE OVER 2,350 HOUR ACCUMULATED FLYING TIME RECOMMENDED BY MANUFACTURE. EIGHTY-NINE ADDITIONAL F-86S WERE PURCHASED BY PAF IN 1966 AND ONLY 40 NOW REMAIN, 36 OF WHICH ARE AIRWORTHY. LESS THAN HALF THAT NUMBER IS FLYING, HOWEVER, FOR LACK OF SPARE PARTS.

7. PAF RECEIVED 27 USED B-57S IN 1960. ONLY 11 REMAIN ON INVENTORY AND FOUR TO FIVE ARE OUT OF COMMISSION BECAUSE OF LACK OF SPARES. SINCE THIS AIRCRAFT IS NO LONGER IN SERVICE WITH USAF AND MAINTENANCE BECOMING PROHIBITIVE, THE REMAINING B-57S WILL BE PHASED OUT IN NEAR FUTURE.
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